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YOUNG LIBRARIANS: AND  
OTHER PAPERS.

By W. MUNRO MACKENZIE,  
Sub-Librarian, Aberdeen Public  
Library.





W. Jolly & sons.



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ATRIUM

## YOUNG LIBRARIANS.

IT is interesting to notice the growing importance, day by day, of the place in society of Free Public Libraries. Although public libraries are comparatively of modern growth, the town that cannot boast of possessing one is, even now, distinctly behind the times. There is no doubt that the spread of education to all classes has had a great deal to do with this imperative demand on the part of the people for free literature. But it is not the intention here to deal with public libraries, but rather with the public librarian, and to see what benefit to the general reader can be derived from instruction given by master librarians, to those who are to follow in their steps.

The lectures delivered on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of last week, at the summer meeting for Library Assistants connected with the North-Western Branch of the Library Association, were of a very interesting order. The session was opened by Mr. Henry Guppy (joint librarian of the famous John Rylands Library, Manchester), who gave the lecture entitled "What is Bibliography?" To the amateur bibliophile, or book-lover, as well as to the ordinary reader, this lecture was full of useful advice. Quoting Dr. Graesel, the German scholar's description of the three principal qualifications of a librarian as (1) the love of order, (2) the love of work, (3) amiability, he said Dr. Graesel had disregarded the most important qualification of all, the love of books. The man, indeed, who lacked this last qualification, which was in fact the first requisite, had better withdraw from the supervision or care of books. With regard to the kind of books the librarian should read, Mr. Guppy



quoted the Bishop of London's address to librarians, when he laid stress on the necessity of thoroughly familiarising themselves with history, and also acquiring a good working knowledge of all the departments of literature and science, not only such a smattering as might have been acquired at school or college, but an acquaintance with the progress and development of knowledge in all its branches, keeping abreast of the times, so that they might be able to give not only the titles of the newest and best books, but discuss intelligently the new theories advanced, and estimate rightly the importance of additions. Surely these requisitions to knowledge all men should, to a certain extent, endeavour to acquire, in order that the ratepayer may earn his true name of citizen, rather than the one which is so often thrown at him—namely, "the man in the street." After going more fully into the question of reading, the lecturer concluded that part of his lecture by a fine quotation from Gilfillan, who said "Let us read thoughtfully, not lazily so as to mumble the words of the author; not slavishly to assent to his every word, and cry 'Amen' to his every conclusion; but to read him with suspicion and enquiry, not with the wonder of ignorance. Continuing, Mr. Guppy pointed out that the wise student despises nothing, but is constantly collecting materials from all sources in order to widen the horizon of his mental outlook. If they would have a bright and clean instrument ready to their hands, they must be diligent gleaners of inconsiderable trifles—fragments of knowledge, each perhaps insignificant in itself, but capable of leading in the aggregate to results of great interest and importance.

Mr. Robert Gladstone, jun., M.A., B.C.L., (a relation of the late Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone) commenced



the second day's proceedings by delivering a brilliant lecture on "Some of the great English Works of Historical Reference." He laid emphasis on the practical value of history, showing how its lessons enabled us to deal with great questions of reform now in course of debate and settlement. What was needed to-day, above all things, was that things should be looked upon more in a historical way. A knowledge of history was essential to everyone who wished to understand the course of events, but the question arose as to the writers to be relied upon. Gardiner and Mullinger's "Introduction to English History" was a most important work, and should be carefully studied, especially the latter portion by Professor Mullinger. The lecturer urged students of English history to take full advantage of the different series of records that have been, and are being published—the Calendar of State Papers, the Rolls Series, and the publications of the Historical Manuscripts Commission. In the Calendar of State Papers was to be found, chiefly, political matter and state documents, while the Rolls Series dealt with the Monastic Records and Chronicles. The Historical Manuscripts Commission had done splendid work in unearthing from the papers and documents of great historical families, much material which sheds strong life on the social, political, and religious life of the English people, at various periods. Mr. Gladstone, remarking on the way these records ought to be used, said that the best key to their contents was to be found in the Wigan Reference Library Catalogue, compiled by Mr. Folkard, the Librarian. Although these records were valuable for getting at the *origins* of English history, a study of the Statutes was of the first im-

portance in a right *interpretation* of English history. The works of Gardiner, Green, Froude, Stubbs, Hallam, Kemble, and Pearson, should be studied, but the closest attention should be given to Flaherty's History of England, Parry's Parliaments of England, and Nicolas's Chronology of History, these being three concise and admirably planned books. The little work by Acland and Ransome on the "Political History of England," an outline to 1881, was an excellent book for ready reference. Dealing with later historians, the lecturer warned students from putting too much confidence in Froude, as he sometimes sacrificed accuracy of detail to fluency of style. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, he said, was the most trustworthy historian we had to-day, his works on the history of the early Stuart troubles being very excellent. With regard to Constitutional History (upon which subject the lecturer thought more humbug had been written than on any other) the work by Stubbs was amongst the best, although his volumes were far from being faultless.

In the afternoon a visit was paid to Knowsley Hall, the seat of the Earls of Derby. To most people this family is only familiar as being the initiators of the famous annual races, the "Derby and the "Oaks." But though they have played a great part in encouraging and developing sport, they have not neglected the realms of literature, but have, after many years, brought together one of the finest private collections of books in the country. There are many rare manuscripts and valuable early printed books, as well as some fine specimens of English and foreign book-binding, to be found here. But perhaps the chief interest during this visit was centered in the Bagfordised and Grangerised

books, of which this library can boast a precious collection. As these works were being inspected, Mr. Shaw, master and librarian of the Athenæm Library, Liverpool, explained the work of John Bagford and James Granger. The place of these two men in the opinion of bookmen is not a very enviable one. Bagford is famous as the great mutilator of books, though not without a purpose. Born in 1650, he became a shoemaker, and afterwards collected books on commission, and took it into his head to write a history of printing. He collected title pages, leaves, colophons, initial letters, covers, bosses, and clasps, and this collection of 64 folio volumes, now in the British Museum, contained 25,000 title pages. He never wrote the contemplated history so that when we saw in catalogues of old books such phrases as "wanting title," "wanting last page," we might be sure the Bagfordiser had been at work. On this practice Mr. Shaw passed a sweeping condemnation. Continuing, he said it was almost impossible to calculate the damage done to books by the devotees of "Grangerising." To Grangerise a book meant to insert in a book a plate or an illustration (from some other work) which would illustrate the text. This practice was carried to such an extreme that collectors were not satisfied until they had gathered from any book no matter how rare or valuable (if their purse could support it) an illustration or a portrait that related to the life and surroundings of their favourite authors. If, for instance, a favourite author referred in his works to bees, or flowers, or certain places, the Grangeriser would forthwith make a minute collection of matter and illustrations relating to bees and flowers and places mentioned. In the British Museum there was an illustrated copy of Pennant's "London,"



which cost its maker £7,500. Mr. Shaw said he only objected to the craze where one book was rendered incomplete in order to add to another unnecessarily.

It would be hardly proper in leaving this sketch of Knowsley Hall not to make the observation, that if the Derby family figure strongly in sport and literature, they also appear as important characters in England's history, and especially in Wigan's history. Was it not the Earl of Derby who, during the Civil War, opposed the Parliamentary forces, and after many disastrous engagements at various times, in and around Wigan, was forced to acknowledge defeat and flee, hiding in the Old Dog Inn, Millgate, and escaping through the then ruined town wall; but who in the end was captured and executed at Bolton in 1651? The chair on which the Earl of Derby sat just previous to execution is in the possession (rather a sad relic) of the family. William, the sixth Early of Derby, was Mayor of Wigan for the year 1618. The meeting closed on Friday after two useful lectures on Library Administration, by Mr. P. Cowell, principal librarian of the Liverpool Public Libraries.

## A WIGAN POET: JOHN CRITCHLEY PRINCE.

### I.

THE career of John Critchley Prince forms one of those pathetic life stories so often characteristic of men of genius. In Prince's life there is much to attract and much to repel; but taken in its entirety it forms a remarkable example of what may be accomplished by a gifted man in the most adverse circumstances. The human side of Prince's career presents much that reminds one of the poet Burns, though no intellectual parallel can be drawn between the two characters. Both were poets born and not made; but whereas Burns can claim a high place in the roll of national bards, Prince has earned for himself no more than a provincial poet's fame. But if grave doubt may be cast upon his work deserving national remembrance, he may be welcomed as a genius who first saw the light in Wigan.

John Critchley Prince was born on the 21st of June, 1808. It is said that his birthplace was in Coppull Lane or Bottling Wood, in the northern part of the town, standing off Wigan Lane; but no conclusive evidence has, as yet, been brought forward to prove the supposition. That his boyhood was spent in this neighbourhood, however, is most probable, for we are told by the poet's friend, Mr. Mandley, that he attended the Baptist Sunday School; and the only school in Wigan, at the time, belonging to that Church, was in Lord Street, close by Prince's supposed home. His father, a reedmaker for weavers, was a drunken and cruel man, whose dissipations kept the family in constant poverty.

The boy Prince was set to work at reedmaking with his father when nine years old. He had received no

education other than being taught to read (and that imperfectly) at the Sunday School, and the instructions he could gain from his mother—an intelligent and industrious woman. He very early, however, showed a passion for reading, and though his father forbade him books, and thrashed him if he found him with one, any story or volume of poetry which he could procure was eagerly devoured. Often during the night when the house was quiet and all the family asleep, he would creep downstairs, take from its hiding-place the forbidden fruit, and by the light of the “slacked” fire, revel in the charms of “Robinson Crusoe” and other wondrous characters ever of delight to boys. Of this period he speaks in one of his poems<sup>1</sup>:—

With none to strengthen or to teach my mind,  
I groped my way like someone, lost and blind,  
Within the windings of a tangled wood ;  
But still by wakeful and enquiring thought,  
My watchful spirit in its musings, caught  
A partial glance of what was true and good.

Thinking to better their condition, the Princes, in 1821, removed to Manchester. John was now thirteen years old, with four years' experience in the wearisome business of reedmaking.

This move of his parents, though perhaps giving the boy greater facilities for indulging in his favourite pursuit, did not make his lot easier. Trade did not improve, and the Princes were poorer than ever. The boy's character, however, was superior to his surroundings ; his sanguine temperament became the guardian of his muse. About this time he obtained a copy of the works of Lord Byron, which

<sup>1</sup> To J. P. Westhead, Esq.



he read and re-read with the greatest enthusiasm. "His mind," as Mr. Mandley says, "had now met with its natural aliment." Though this was not Prince's first introduction to poetry, he had never before come into the full presence of the power of one of Britain's greatest bards. The strains of the noble poet awoke a kindred response in the breast of the obscure and humble boy, who from that moment became a worshipper at the fane of the Muses."<sup>1</sup> He found in the study of the English poets the best solace in his lonely hours. Thomson and Goldsmith became his especial favourites, on account, no doubt, of the exquisite descriptions of nature and country life in their works. Prince's love for nature appears in nearly all his poems, but in none so strongly as "The Poet's Sabbath," where he exclaims—

The voice of Nature is a voice of power,  
More eloquent than mortal lips can make ;  
And even now in this most solemn hour,  
She bids my noblest sympathies awake.  
Nature ! I love all creatures for thy sake,  
But chiefly man, who is estranged from thee !  
Oh ! would that he would turn from strife and take  
Sweet lessons from thy lore, and learn to be  
Submissive to thy laws, wise, happy, good, and free !

As the thoughtful boy grew up into the studious youth, the misery in his father's house oppressed him more and more, and he determined to have a home of his own as soon as possible. Force of circumstances had compelled the family to remove to Hyde, in Cheshire, where John fell in love with a pretty girl of the name of Orme, to whom he was married in the latter end of 1826

<sup>1</sup> Mandley (George Frederick) Biographical sketch of Prince. "In Hours with the Muses." 1841.

or early in 1827, while yet under nineteen years of age. If this step was a source of happiness to the young man, plenty was not its fruit. The young people had a hard fight for mere maintainance, but they struggled on for three years. Prince was now an occasional contributor to "The Phoenix," a Manchester magazine, and other periodicals. His first verses were written in 1827, and though they cannot be ranked with his best poetry, the following lines from "The Soldier of Progress" make an excellent maiden effort—

Come forth, thrice-tempered steel of Truth,  
And thou, stern virtue, lend thy shield,  
Immortal Freedom, strong in youth,  
Equip me for the field ;  
Buckle thy corslet on my breast,  
Set thy unshivered lance in rest,  
Lend all thy panoply to-day ;  
Plant thy bright casket on my brow,  
Crown me with snowy plumes—Ah ! now  
I'm ready for the fray.

In 1830 reports were circulated that reedmakers were in great demand in France, and Prince determined to go and try his fortune. Leaving his wife (a loom weaver) and three children behind, he set off in the most hopeful frame of mind, but arrived in London to learn that the Revolution (of 1830) had broken out across the water. He determined, however, to proceed, thinking the ominous reports exaggerated. After much discouragement he reached St. Quentin, in Picardy, where he had expected to find plenty work. But recent events had paralysed trade, and consequently he was not wanted. Though bitterly disappointed he did not give up his adventure, but set off for Mulhausen, an important manufacturing

town in Alsace, staying at Paris for a few days on his way. After a long tramp Mulhausen was reached, but he found all the workers there in great distress. His cup of bitterness was now nearly full. A stranger in a strange land, with little knowledge of the language, no friend or acquaintance to appeal to, and nothing wherewith to earn a living. The Mayor of the town afforded him some help in his wretchedness, and Prince, in hopes of trade increasing, stayed here five months. But nothing came to his hand, and he longed to get home again. With ten *sous* in his pocket he started his tramp back to Calais. The beautiful scenery through which he passed formed the chief sustainer of his spirits, but he got little food to keep up his strength. He arrived in London worn out and penniless. Selling his waistcoat for eightpence he bought with the coppers a penny loaf and four pennyworth of notepaper. He then entered a tavern, ordered a little refreshment, and filled all his paper with poetry. But when he came to offer his work to the London booksellers he was met by refusals, his ragged and famished appearance doubtless being against him. He wandered for two days, a dejected outcast, about the great metropolis, and then turned his steps towards home.

After a weary tramp he eventually arrived in Hyde, but found that in his absence, owing to stress of circumstances, his wife and children had been compelled to leave their home, and had entered the Poor House in Wigan. Prince quickly wended his way thither, and bringing them back to Manchester, settled for a time in that city. During his short stay here, his youngest child, an only boy, died.

The bard has recorded his grief at this time in some



of his most touching verse. The poet and father are beautifully revealed in the following lines :—

\* \* \* \* \*

'Twas sweet to kiss thy sleeping eyes at morn,  
And press thy lips that welcomed my return ;  
'Twas sweet to hear thy cheerful voice at play,  
And watch thy steps the live-long Sabbath day ;  
'Twas sweet to take thee on my knee, and hear  
Thine artless narrative of joy or fear—  
To catch the dawning of inquiring thought,  
And every change that time and teaching wrought.  
This was my wish—to guard thee as a child,  
And keep thy stainless spirit undefiled :  
To guide thy progress upward unto youth,  
And store thy mind with every precious truth :  
Send thee to mingle with the world's rude throng,  
In moral worth and manly virtues strong,  
With such rare energies as well might claim  
The patriot's glory and the poet's fame.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Prince did not remain long in Manchester. He was soon back again in Hyde, working with his father once more. Reedmaking was certainly a fluctuating and unluccrative business, but it was the only source of income to Prince. Though he had to "bow in passive patience to his doom," he was not "beset around with wretchedness and gloom," for he now entered upon the brightest phase of his career. In 1838 he secured an appointment as yarn warehouseman at the mills of Mr. Randall Hibbert, of Hyde. This situation seemed to have suited him well. Compared with his last state, he was now in comfort ; freed from the corroding cares of poverty, the whole aspect of his affairs became much brighter. Moreover, his poetic gift became known and

<sup>1</sup> From "The Father's Lament."

appreciated; and this, above all other considerations, gave the poet the most happiness. A few literary-inclined friends gradually gathered round him; and these friends in time formed themselves into an association called the "Literary Twelve." The "Twelve" met periodically, when papers on literary topics were read and discussed. Sometimes these papers found their way into the press—Prince's amongst others. In this way public attention was attracted towards the poet, his contributions to the periodicals appeared oftener, and in 1841, by the united efforts of his friends—for he could not afford the pecuniary risk himself—his first volume of poems, entitled "Hours with the Muses," was published.

The venture was a great success. The publication of the poems had not been preceded by elaborate notices to the effect that a great poet had arisen. The work was left to take its own chance, and it did not pass unnoticed. The little volume had an excellent reception, and many editions were called for. If some interest was attached to the work on account of the author's humble position, it was the sweetness, simplicity, and sincerity of his verse that appealed to all classes. Although the poet had been cradled in poverty, brought up in the most degrading environment, and passed on to manhood to taste some of life's bitterest disappointments, yet in his poetry there is little trace of misanthropy; instead of drawing from the wells of bitter experience language which portray's life in its darkest aspect, he makes his past hard lot the text for many lessons to humanity, and his muse is never seen in a stronger or more poetic vein than when it is dwelling on the beauties of creation and the grandeur of living.

“The Poet’s Sabbath” is the first poem in “Hours with the Muses,” and perhaps takes the first place in the efforts of Prince’s muse. The poem is lengthy, containing altogether fifty-six stanzas of nine lines each. The vivid imagery in many of the verses and the high poetic tone sustained to the end is very striking. The following selections will speak for themselves :—

\* \* \* \* \*

God of the boundless universe ! I come  
To hold communion with myself and Thee !  
And though excess of beauty makes me dumb,  
My thoughts are eloquent with all I see !  
My foot is on the mountains,—I am free,  
And buoyant as the winds that round me blow !  
My dreams are sunny as yon pleasant lea,  
And tranquil as the pool that sleeps below ;  
While, circling round my heart, a poet’s raptures glow.

\* \* \* \* \*

Behold each various feature of the scene,  
Shining in light, and softening into shade ;  
Peak beyond peak, with many a mile between,—  
The rude defile, the lonely forest glade,—  
The gold-besprinkled meadows, softly swayed  
By every fitful frolic of the breeze,—  
The river, like a wandering child, conveyed  
Back to the bosom of its native seas,—  
Paved with all glorious shapes, skies, clouds, hills, rocks,  
and trees.

\* \* \* \* \*

Man cannot stand beneath a loftier dome  
Than this cerulean canopy of light—  
The Eternal’s vast, immeasurable home,  
Lovely by day, and wonderful by night !  
Than this enamelled floor so greenly bright,  
A richer pavement man hath never trod ;  
He cannot gaze upon a holier sight  
Than fleeting cloud, fresh wave, and fruitful sod—  
Leaves of that boundless Book, writ by the hand of God !



The sun, now resting on the mountain's head,  
 Flings rosy radiance o'er the smiling land ;  
 Around his track gigantic clouds are spread,  
 Like the creation of some wizard hand ;  
 Now they assume new shapes, wild, strange, and grand,  
 Touched by the breath of eve's ethereal gale :  
 Like burning cliffs and blazing towers they stand,  
 Frowning above an emerald-paven vale,  
 Such as my fancy found in Childhood's fairy tale.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now the lone twilight, like a widowed maiden,  
 Pale, pure, and pensive, steals along the skies ;  
 With dewy tears the sleeping flowers are laden—  
 The leaves are stirred with spiritual sighs ;  
 The stars are looking down with radiant eyes,  
 Like hosts of watchful Cherubim, that guard  
 A wide and weary world ; the glow worm lies,  
 A living gem upon the grassy sward,  
 Uncared for and unsought, save by the wandering bard.

\* \* \* \* \*

Blest Sabbath time ! on life's tempestuous ocean,  
 The poor man's only haven of repose—  
 Oh, thou hast wakened many a sweet emotion,  
 Since morning's sun upon thy being rose !  
 Now thou art wearing gently to a close—  
 Thy starry pinions are prepared for flight—  
 A dim forgetfulness within me grows—  
 External things are stealing from my sight—  
 Good night ! departing Sabbath of my soul—good night !

The other poems in the volume which linger in the mind, are "The Captive's Dream," "The Father's Lament," and "The Voice of the Primrose." The last-mentioned is a beautifully conceived poem, and shows the poet's love for the smallest things in nature, while "The Captive's Dream," containing fifty stanzas of various metres is as one of his critic's says, "of thrilling power, complete in detail ; and whilst bristling in concise,

illuminating portraiture, is replete with a spirit of deep tenderness."

Prince, now an acknowledged poet, and known as "The Bard of Hyde," gave up his position in the Hyde mills and took a little shop in Long Millgate, Manchester. He was the object of great interest here, and new friends and admirers gathered round him. He has been described by his sympathetic biographer, Dr. Douglas Lithgow, as being "a man of slight physique, but wiry, and rather above the medium height, being about five feet ten. His head was massive and striking, his forehead lofty and expansive, his face expressive, and a profusion of dark-brown silky hair, which he wore long and flowing behind, added much to his peculiar appearance. Although the various details of his features were of an ordinary character, yet the aspect of his head and face in the aggregate was certainly intellectual, and the general effect suggestive and remarkable."

The Sun Inn, opposite the poet's shop, became quite a centre of literary Lancashire. At these Sun Inn meetings Prince was the central figure. His conversation when once let loose fascinated all, and when they could persuade him to sing his voice charmed the whole company. A Literary Association was soon organised, with Prince as one of the foremost members. But all these sweets were not without their bitters. In the words of one of the poet's critics,<sup>1</sup> "his friends' admiration often took a fluid form." In the midst of his first success, the influence of his associates nipped the bud of the second. He gave his ear to their flattery and suffered through it. When the first flush of prosperity passed

<sup>1</sup> Axon (W. E. A.) *Cheshire Gleanings* (1884), p. 23.

away, and his position again became precarious, few of these attentive friends stood by him. A gentle, sensitive, and unsuspecting nature such as Prince possessed, needed guidance and support at a critical time like this, and though true friends did come forward and help him in his difficulties, he never wholly recovered from the sting left in his soul, as the fruit of these happy days.

## II.

"They have played with me like a toy and cast me away because I got a little soiled in the handling." These bitter words of Prince are true. The success that accompanied his first work carried in its wake tendencies which found their best soil in popularity; and when developed blighted the whole of his after life. Intemperance, irresolution, loss of self-control—these were the traits which grew into strong evidence during the happy days of his recognition. Prince experienced two awakenings: the first when he found himself famous; the other when he realised himself abandoned and soiled after twelve months feasting and revelry. With the sting of remorse and the gall of disappointment torturing his soul, how applicable are his own lines!

"Would we admire the lark's melodious glee,  
Yet dispossess him of his skyward wings?  
Alas! we pluck the wild flower with a smile,  
Inhale its fragrant breath, but stain its leaves awhile."<sup>1</sup>

At this critical period (1842), one of his admirers—Mr. George Falkner, editor of "*Bradshaw's Journal*"—

<sup>1</sup> From "Stanzas, written after a winter's walk in the country."—*Hours with the Muses*.



came to his rescue. He suggested to Prince that he should undertake a journey on foot to London, and record his impressions and experiences, in descriptive letters, addressed to the editor of the Journal. In his absence his family would be maintained, and he would receive a remittance for each letter—"as the robin pays its way with a welcome song."<sup>1</sup> Prince readily agreed, and during his journeys addressed nine delightful letters to "Bradshaw's Journal." Easy, simple, and eloquent in his style, with enthusiastic poetic effusions when the scene he is depicting appeals to him most strongly, his "Rambles of a Rhymster" afford the reader no small insight into his powers as a writer of prose. His ease in this direction may be attributed—as was the case with Southey—to his assiduous practice for many years in writing verse.

Nature was just opening to the breath of Spring as Prince started on his tour from Cheadle—where he parted with his wife. Surrounded by "green fields and luxuriant hedgerows" he took a mental look backward at the city of his humiliation, and experienced no longing to "turn again." Pushing on through Wilmslow he rested for the first night at Congleton. The next day he passed through the Potteries—a region which he "never desired to see again." On reaching Newcastle he despatched his first letter for print, dated April 20th, 1842. The country, as yet, had not been very inspiring, but at Trentham, the beautiful seat of the Duke of Sutherland, he was much impressed with the whole landscape; the wooded hills and the superior character of the countryside pleasing him exceedingly. As he

<sup>1</sup> Procter's "Prince of Provincial Poets,"—*Memorials of Manchester*.

reached Stone the pleasant scenes "dissolved away," and the Birmingham district failed to touch his poetic fancy. Pursuing his way leisurely through the "picturesque city" of Coventry, the quiet village of Kenilworth, and the "antiquated streets" of Warwick he neared the land of Shakespeare. As he approached Stratford-on-Avon his excitement naturally increased, and overcome by the strangeness of his thoughts he sat down by the side of a milestone, on which was inscribed "One mile to Stratford." As a slight expression of his feelings, he thought it would not be inappropriate to walk "barefooted to the grave of the Bard of Mankind." The indifferent attitude, however, of the inhabitants somewhat cooled him; but the following day, as he wandered round the haunts of Shakespeare, nothing could damp his enthusiasm, and standing over the grave of the "undying one" his pent-up emotion found utterance in some of his noblest verse. One stanza from the "Lines suggested at the Grave of Shakespeare" must suffice:—

"Once mortal here, but now Immortal One,  
Thou great and glorious favourite of fame,  
Thoughtful I stand upon thy grave alone  
Tranced by the mighty magic of thy name;  
Filled with a slender portion of thy flame,  
Hither a pilgrim I have proudly sped,  
To linger for a brief and happy space  
About the genius hallowed resting place  
Of England's honoured dead."

When Prince had reached Chipping Norton he was called home suddenly on urgent business, and the "Rambles" were temporarily suspended. In mid-summer, however, he set out once more; this time mapping out a more interesting route. After making a brief

sojourn at Chester, where he was much pleased with the quaint antiquities of the old town, he turned north, and took ship from Liverpool to Rhyl. The first object that riveted his attention in the 'Switzerland of Britain,' was Rhuddlan Castle. Seated amidst the "moss and ivy clothed ruins" of that ancient structure he pondered over its great historical associations, and as the captivating aspect of his surroundings grew upon him he abandoned morose description and penned some fine retrospective verses on the Welsh bards and heroes.

Reluctantly leaving this spot he made his way through Abergele to Conway. The romantic castle and the lovely vale of Conway made rival claims upon his admiration, but after passing upon the castle the flattering observation that it was a "noble and imposing ruin," he devoted two long letters to the feast nature had provided for him. The everchanging picture of that scene enchanted him. "At one time I seemed to be traversing a calm, gentle, and pastoral hollow, through which the quiet river wound its pleasant way, flanked by green swelling hills, speckled with sheep and shepherds' cottages; anon, up rose a wall of bleak, vast, and sterile mountains, whose summits seemed to defy the power of man to invade them. By and by would appear sweet snatches of pasture land, blushing with red clover, and filling the air with delicious odour—meadows, sprinkled with gold, and undulating like verdant lakes—devious green lanes, with their hedgerows starred with wild roses, entwined within the dewy fingers of the honeysuckle—sloping banks, gay with a profusion of 'lang yellow broom,' absolutely dazzling to the sight—cool secluded nooks, where the retiring and stately foxglove shook its crimson bells in the summer air; and then, perhaps, the



next hundred paces would bring me into a region of the most sterile and savage magnificence." Such is the exalted prose style of Prince. His sixth and seventh letters contain word paintings so vivid that it would be difficult for the most accomplished writer to surpass them.

Pursuing his way through Llawrst and Bettws-y-Coed, Prince entered the valley of the Lligwy, and confesses that "this exquisitely charming region had not been surpassed by anything he had yet seen." From Bangor he went to Menai, and on his way thither was favoured with a first view of Snowdon. From Menai he proceeded to Carnarvon, and the castle there drew from him a charming sonnet. His most inspiring experience, however, was still before him. Arriving at Llanberris one bright summer morning he determined to explore the monarch of Snowdonia before the close of another day. Preferring to be without companions or a guide on his excursion he set out alone. The account of the ascent shows Prince in one of his strongest descriptive veins. The following words are taken at random. "As I ascended the rocks of Llanberris and the neighbouring mountains appeared to be on a level with my feet; the large inn in the vale dwindled to the size of a bird cage; the castle of Dolbarden, which stands near it, to a mere toy; the lakes which wash its base to two compact blue mirrors, occasionally spotted with the reflection of white clouds passing over them. Higher still, and the silence, the intense awful silence of mountain solitudes, broken only by the bleating of sheep, or the reverberating explosions in the slate quarries, became more and more impressive." After his descent from Snowdon, Prince stayed to rest in the vale of Llanberris, and whilst there penned some

verses on the spring which he found on the mountain's top.

Leaving Llanberris Prince returned through the vale of Lligwy, kept on the great Holyhead road, passed Bettws-y-coed, and directed his steps southward. His "Sonnet on Quitting North Wales" contains some characteristic lines :—

"Farewell, proud region ! where the living God  
 Hath built a temple for the living heart  
 To worship in sincerely. I have trod  
 From cloudy towns and fretful men apart  
 Thine aisles of majesty. In truth thou art  
 A vast cathedral where devotion springs  
 In feelings not in words. Thou dost impart  
 Sublimest doctrines by sublimest things.  
 The mountains are thy priesthood ; Snowdon flings  
 A silent language from his awful face ;  
 Prayer goeth up from streams, the cataract sings  
 Incessant anthems to the throne of grace ;  
 And I have lingered in thy fane to feel  
 The Eternal Presence o'er my spirit steal."

Original sonnets and poems are interweaved through all the four letters Prince addressed from Wales, while the country in his midland tour, only caused him to unburden his feelings once in verse. "Sterile mountains" always appealed to his poetic temperament more than "undulating meadow lands." In his fifth letter he tells his readers that he has "an uncontrollable passion for mountain scenery, and though circumstances may lull it to sleep, the slightest distant view of a country of that character awakens the old feeling, and he longs for wings to gratify his wishes." When once Wales is left behind, Prince takes the reader rather hurriedly through

Shrewsbury, Bilston, Birmingham, and Coventry to the metropolis.

Whilst Prince was taking his rambles, many of his friends, perceiving the uncertainty of his livelihood, made strenuous efforts to secure for him some Government appointment, and after much correspondence they succeeded. The short suspension of Prince's tour at Chipping Norton was caused by his new prospects; but the delay gave him a permanent occupation as the termination of his second journey. The character of the post was not exactly known at first, but Prince eventually learned that it was in connection with the Southampton Post Office. His own opinion, expressed in a letter to Mr. R. W. Procter, of Manchester, dated June 22nd, 1842, from London, is of interest. ". . . You will forgive me not writing sooner, as I have been so unsettled. I find my earliest friends the most faithful of all. Is it not lamentable that after being promise-crammed for twelve months I am now compelled to sink down into a penny postman, at 15s. per week. It stings me to the quick. I have, however, learned a lesson I shall not soon forget, and by which I hope ultimately to profit. I go to my new appointment [at Southampton] to-morrow. I do not know how I shall like it, not very well I am sure, though I shall then be really and truly a *man of letters*. Let me tell you that you are happy in a calling independent of the pen. You will excuse my brevity, as I am not 'i' the vein.'—Believe me, yours faithfully, J. C. PRINCE." It is not surprising to learn from Mr. Procter, Prince's correspondent, that "after a few days investigation at Southampton and at London, the poet, failing to appreciate the advantages of his new Government



position, returned to his shop in Long Millgate, Manchester."

In rejecting this permanent post Prince forfeited the patronage of many who had formerly exerted themselves in his behalf. The "ungrateful genius" found it necessary now to rely upon his own exertions, and in a little while he removed from Long Millgate to Hanover Street, Manchester, where he again followed the trade he had learned at his father's side. It was a double change. To use a trite expression, "he had had his day," and was clearly sinking back into obscurity. The changed conditions of the poet are touchingly shown in a reminiscence of Mrs. Linneas Banks, the popular Lancashire novelist. "He was a reedmaker once more ; but his soul sang as he adjusted the slight wires within their frame, and in the intervals of moody bitterness a poem would well forth. Now and then a poetical friend would drop in upon him ; I used to call as I went to town, and chat with him by the hour, as he worked away. I think that at that period, and for some time previously, Mrs. Prince helped him with her needle, if not with some other handicraft of which I knew nothing ; but I never went into any other part of the domicile than that bare room, with its one chair and stool, and its gaunt and ungainly, but intellectual inmate, who had ever a book or a paper by his side ; and, unless in one of his moody veins, was glad to hold converse with any friend of congenial taste who was not too proud to visit the reedmaker."

Prince's next literary effort was to begin a series of "Random Readings from the Poets of the Nineteenth Century" in Bradshaw's Journal (Aug., 1842). Two papers, however, only appeared ; the first, an intensely eulogistic paper on John Keats (Prince's favourite poet

after Goldsmith); the other a friendly notice of Ebenezer Elliott, the corn-law rhymers. The chief interest, however, of Prince's later years is centred in the four volumes of poetry, with prose sketches, published between the years 1841 and 1861. Taken as a whole, the work covering this period, instead of bearing the marks of a ripened mind, fails to reach the standard of poetic excellence attained in his maiden volume. His frustrated hopes, his distracted mind, his unsettled affairs—all these were detrimental to the upward growth of his muse, and were without doubt the cause of so much indifferent verse issuing from his pen.

Six years elapsed before Prince issued his second volume of poems, appropriately entitled "Dreams and Realities" (1847). In the interval he had enjoyed a brief period of popularity, and vigorous efforts had been made to restore him to a respectable position. But whilst subscriptions were being raised, and readings given in various towns in his behalf, a mad fit of intemperance seized hold of him, and organised assistance once more came to nought. People became prejudiced against him, and a rather cool reception was accorded to his new volume. His three other works, "The Poetic Rosary" (1850), "Autumn Leaves" (1856), and "Miscellaneous Poems" (1861) were published purely for the sake of obtaining cash, and were never intended, nor expected, by the author to enhance his reputation as a bard. And yet in these later volumes there are many poems which do high honour to Prince's muse. "The Press and the Cannon," "The Golden Land of Poesy," his temperance poems, and many others, may be favourably compared with his acknowledged masterpieces, although a vast amount of the



verse from which the above are taken would doubtless have never appeared in print except through the stress of Prince's circumstances.

Prince had removed in 1843 from Manchester to Ashton-under-Lyne, and it was in this town most of his after years were spent. He held a situation as reed-maker in a manufactory there for a considerable time, but he relinquished reedmaking in anticipation of a great sale of "Dreams and Realities." He afterwards became journeyman in his old trade, and tramped from town to town seeking employment, but finding little. As time wore on his circumstances grew worse and worse, and if it had not been for the devotion and exertions of his second wife he would have sunk down into the most abject poverty. He seemed, in fact, to be as a ship without a rudder, tossed about by every fitful wind, and succumbing at last to his own weaknesses. If a man of strong character offered him counsel he was deeply repentant, and he would express his high resolves in lofty verse. If he came in contact with a few 'artists' of like temperament with himself, "Bohemian revelry" was the sure outcome of their company. Prince was old and broken when many men are in the fruitful autumn of their days. Mr. Procter tells us<sup>1</sup> that "several years prior to his decease Prince resumed his visits to Manchester, and many old associations seemed to be partially resuscitated. One of the last occasions was in the autumn of 1865, when the poor fellow was the victim of partial paralysis, a sad wreck, to whom pipe and glass, no longer mere indulgences, were stern necessities. In the spring of 1866 Prince, supported by

<sup>1</sup> Memorials of Manchester, by R. W. Procter,



his wife, walked his final ramble. He chose the Mottram Road, because he knew that as he advanced in that direction he would be environed by the 'everlasting hills'—the Bucktons, the Oldermans, the Dark Kinders,—he loved so well and had celebrated so often. These were the points of earth where the departing spirit the latest lingered." He had returned to Hyde to die—the little town in which he had first won the love of a pretty maid, and where he first earned his poetic name and fame. The "Bard of Hyde" passed away in his fifty-eighth year on the 3rd of May, 1866.

The name of John Critchley Prince is almost synonymous with "Hours with the Muses." That work marks the highest point to which he ever reached in the literary world, and contains the loftiest outpourings of his muse. Although, as noted above, he published four other volumes of verse, the inscription which follows his name on his tombstone, in Hyde churchyard, is simply "Author of 'Hours with the Muses.'" On that one volume rest his claims as a poet, as distinct from popular rhymster, and by that volume his most ardent admirers would have him judged. He was a lesser light, but in his own sphere he shone brightly.

## CROMWELLIAN AND NAPOLEONIC LITERATURE: A NOTE.

HECTOR MACPHERSON in his excellent book on "Herbert Spencer: the man and his work," says: "A philosophic thinker of the first rank is always known by the amount of literature which his writings call forth. Descartes, Locke, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, Hegel—these, in their respective spheres, were epoch makers." The above words might, with propriety, be applied to men of letters in other spheres, as Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, and also to men of action, as Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon Buonaparte. The two latter characters have, especially, been favourite subjects to historians and other scholars during recent years. And though it may be true that to touch the life of Cromwell is to touch the national life and character of the English people at one of the most momentous periods in its history, that to approach the career of Napoleon is to come face to face with a revolution which shook every power in Europe to its foundations, yet it is the personal element, perhaps more than the historical element, in these two men that has evoked such remarkable attention. The true personality of Oliver is now "emerging from the floating mists of time," and Napoleon the first is being studied by a generation who lived not at the time when heated passions obscured an impartial estimate of the man.

The most interesting books that have recently been issued on the Protector and the Little Corsican (at least as regards this note) are "Napoleon, the last phase," by Lord Rosebery, and "Oliver Cromwell," by

the Right Hon. John Morley, M.P. Each book contains an introductory chapter on the literature of its subject—Lord Rosebery being severe, while Mr. Morley is strongly appreciative. Mr. Morley tells us he was half way across the stream with his biography before he learned those two giants of research—Dr. Gardiner and Mr. Firth—were also in the biographic field. Before these masters of the seventeenth century Mr. Morley does not seem to claim any higher position than that of devoted student. He finds it necessary to gratefully acknowledge his inevitable debt to the heroic labours of Dr. Gardiner, and to the toil and discernment of Mr. Firth, “whose contributions to the ‘Dictionary of National Biography’ show him besides much else, to know the actors and incidents of the Civil Wars with a minute intimacy commonly reserved for the things of the time in which a man actually lives.” Mr. Firth’s life of the Protector, in the Heroes of the Nations Series recently added to the Library, is one great emphasis of this tribute. Mr. Frederic Harrison, himself the author of a brilliant little book on Cromwell, in the Twelve English Statesmen Series, has gone so far as to say of Mr. Firth’s work that “it will pass with historians as the final estimate of the character and achievements of the Protector. It is a book to study, a book to enjoy, a book to live.” In his prologue Mr. Morley summarises the ever changing estimate of Cromwell’s character by his biographers, in such a comprehensive, yet concise manner, that it will be of considerable value as a general guide to the student of the Protectorate.

In spite of the great flood of Napoleonic literature, both English and foreign, that has issued from the press, the latest contributor (Lord Rosebery) asks “Will there



ever be an adequate life of Napoleon? . . . The pages and pages that follow Napoleon's name in library catalogues mainly represent compilations, pamphlets, or lives conscientiously constructed out of dubious or inadequate materials." If this be so it is the colossal genius and the magnetic personality of the 'Emperor' that renders an adequate life by one man impossible. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* for January (1901) says in a scholarly article on "The Later Years of Napoleon," "that his genius was such that the master of almost any profession may study it with profit. The soldier, as Moltke has said, who understands Napoleonic strategy has nothing more to learn. The statesman will be penetrated with admiration for the clearness and boldness of Napoleon's conceptions. The author will be impressed by the force and fire of his spoken and written words. . . The philosopher will watch the influence of a meteoric rise to power, and as meteoric a fall upon a character which is not the less fascinating because it is and always will remain something of a enigma." The four handsome quarto volumes containing Professor Sloane's fascinating narrative of Buonaparte's life, would be considered by the casual reader to be surely as adequate as could be, yet that life, admirable as it is as a picture of the boyhood and future civil life of the 'Emperor,' is weak in the narratives of the Napoleonic campaigns. This work, however, is the fullest that has yet appeared of the general biographies in the English language, its beautifully coloured plates being especially attractive. The Rev. S. Baring-Gould's work is more a study of Buonaparte's mind and character than a general biography, though it may be read as such. The life by W. O'Connor Morris in the *Heroes of the Nations Series*

is excellently adapted for popular reading, and will form a useful handbook to the young student of the Napoleonic period.

## OLIVER CROMWELL: A BRIEF SKETCH.

THE seventeenth century forms one of the most momentous periods in English history. It is one long record of dying forces—forces which in their time moved the heart of the nation, but from which the national life and character of the people went forward with greatly increased strength and prestige. With the death of Elizabeth in 1603, died mediæval England; with the execution of Charles the first, in 1649, arbitrary monarchy was brought to an abrupt close; with the death of Oliver, the Protector, in 1658, despotic democracy passed away. Then the Commonwealth was followed again by the monarchy, but a profligate one, and in the end the gallant Stuart kings were weighed in the balances, found wanting, and disappeared for ever from the English throne. With the accession of William and Mary the English constitution put on a garb which it has worn, with little change, to the present day.

It will thus be seen that the seventeenth century presents, on the whole, a somewhat dark and tumultuous view of the English people. But on looking closer it will be seen that during one brief interval (between the reigns of Charles I. and Charles II.) England rose to the premier position among all the nations of Europe. Her commercial, naval, and military splendour; her political, social, and religious power, moved the envy and admiration of the world. There were many causes, which, combined, placed this country in such a remarkable position, but the chief cause was the concentration of all powers of government in the hands of one extraordinary man—Oliver Cromwell.



Born on the 25th of April, 1599, at Huntingdon, Oliver's boyhood and youth were spent amid surroundings all conducive to the forming of a Puritan character. The influences he was brought under as a child at home would lead his mind in that direction. His education up to his seventeenth year was received from the zealous Puritan, Dr. Thomas Beard. Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where he was admitted on the 23rd April, 1616, was one of the colleges complained of by Archbishop Laud as a nursery of Puritanism.

And this early religious training remained with him through life, growing stronger and stronger as he grew older. After his marriage in 1620, when he settled down to the quiet life of a gentleman farmer at Huntingdon, the only uncontested facts recorded of him are of his spiritual struggles and his strenuous support of the Puritan cause. So high indeed were his religious ideals, that it was not till his thirty ninth year (1638) that, in his own words, he "was given to see light."

But with all his devotion to religion and the Puritan cause, it is difficult to picture Cromwell as a divine. He was distinctly a man of the world—his strength lying rather in action than in speech or debate. All his theories, political or religious, were gained from experience rather than from books; from realities rather than from legal or theological forms.

In 1628 Cromwell, now in his twenty-ninth year was returned to Parliament as member for Huntingdon. In this most eventful Parliament (when that great title deed of England's liberties—The Petition of Right—was insisted upon) he only spoke once, and his remarks on that occasion were in condemnation of the Bishop of Winchester, who had countenanced the preaching of "flat

popery." From this time up to 1640 the life of Cromwell is comparatively uneventful. It was, however, a time of preparation for his future work.

In his quiet home at Huntingdon he watched the course of events, and we can imagine how his wrath would be kindled against the King, as he saw the misery caused by his despotic rule, both in Church and State. As he beheld the extreme measures of Laud in the Church, we can imagine the thought of freedom of worship for all religious sects arising in his mind and taking shape, until it became part of his religious principles. Cromwell was opposed to all kinds of narrowness in religious matters. He had no sympathy with those Puritans who would not tolerate any system of thought and practice which was unconformable with theirs. "His nature was too large, and his character too strong, to allow him to associate with the bigots of his age. It was sufficient for him, if his associates found inspiration in a sense of personal dependence upon God issuing forth in good and beneficent deeds."<sup>1</sup> When, therefore, Cromwell entered the Short Parliament and also the Long Parliament (1640) as Member for Cambridge he took his seat as one opposed to the rule of Charles I.

Of Oliver's personal appearance at this time we have an interesting account from a young courtier. "I came into the House," one morning says Sir Philip Warwick, and perceived a gentleman speaking whom I knew not, very ordinarily appparelled, his linen was plain, and not very clean. His hat was without a hat-band. His stature was of a good size; his face was swollen and reddish; his voice sharp and untuneable; and his eloquence full of fervour."

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner's *Oliver Cromwell*, 1899.



In the short space of two years (1640-42) Cromwell became one of the most influential Members in the House of Commons. Though devoting himself to a great extent to religious matters, attacking, upon every opportunity, the system of Church government set up by Laud, he by no means neglected the political situation, but was one of the fiercest opponents of the King's unconstitutional methods of government. So much did he feel the necessity for strong action being taken against the King, that he is said to have determined never to see England any more if the "Grand Remonstrance" was rejected by the Commons. That great measure, however, was passed, and England retained one of the greatest champions of its liberties.

When war broke out in 1642, Cromwell threw himself into the struggle with all his characteristic energy. It is unnecessary here, however, to relate in detail the remarkable military life of Cromwell; how he raised his unconquerable "Ironsides" of men "who feared God, and would make a conscience of what they did," and turned the probable defeats of Marston Moor (1644) and Naseby (1646) into such decisive victories for the Parliament, as to crush for a considerable time the Royalist cause; how, when the Scots rose up against the Parliament in 1648, he crushed their fine invading army under Hamilton, at Preston and Wigan, and marched triumphant into Scotland; how, after the execution of the King (1649), he passed over into Ireland and stamped out the insurrection there; how, on his return from Ireland he was called upon to take the field against the Scots, and was enabled at Dunbar to achieve his most wonderful victory; or how, exactly twelve months later, he utterly crushed the Royalist cause at the battle of Worcester, (1651).



Though Cromwell by his military exploits has a place amongst the world's greatest generals he was pre-eminently a man of peace. All his speeches in the House of Commons relating to the war show that he was only in favour of war when he was convinced that it was the only means of securing permanent peace and happiness for his countrymen. If Charles had given way to the demands made by the Commons in the "Grand Remonstrance," there would have been no war and Cromwell would never have taken up his sword against him ; and again : if the King had accepted the proposals of the army (between 1646-48), which would have placed him in a no less regal position in the English Constitution than Queen Victoria holds to-day, Cromwell would never have consented to his execution. It was the King's duplicity and treachery, whilst the army was in its most conciliatory attitude towards him, that caused Cromwell to become anxious for his removal ; to sit on the council that tried him ; and to be one of the first to sign his death-warrant (1649).

While Cromwell laid aside his sword after Worcester (1651) he was the foremost man in the nation. As the head of an admiring army (which was now a social as well as a military power) he was virtually the dictator of the realm. He did not, however, employ this power he had gained to further any selfish ambition, but used it to promote the best interests of the State. For nineteen months he laboured assiduously without on any occasion bringing himself conspicuously before the nation. As usual, he devoted himself chiefly to religious matters, defending religious liberty against those who had formerly constituted themselves its champions. When John Owen, the foremost Independent of the day, wished to draw up

fifteen fundamental principles which no one was to be permitted to deny, Cromwell intervened and said: "I had rather Mahometism was permitted among us than that one of God's children be persecuted." These opinions were not popular; to many the toleration for which Cromwell appealed was nothing short of licence, which, if granted would result in anarchy, rendering the last state of the country worse than the first.

Cromwell, however, had no doubts. His conviction had been of gradual growth and the result of experience with divers classes of men holding divers religious views. In 1644 Cromwell defending an anabaptist against Major General Crawford said: "Admit he be, shall that render him incapable to serve the public? Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies." After Naseby a year later he wrote reminding Parliament: "Honest men served you faithfully in this action; I beseech you not to discourage them. He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience and you for the liberty he fights for." Again, after the surrender of Bristol in 1645 he wrote: "Being united in forms commonly called uniformity, every Christian will for peace sake study, and do as far as conscience will permit. . . . In things of the mind we look for no compulsion but that of light and reason." It was this unwavering attitude which evokes the well-known poetic eulogy of Milton:—

*"Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud  
Not of war only, but distractions rude,  
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,  
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed*



*And on the neck of crownèd fortune proud  
Has reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,  
While Darwen stream with blood of Scots imbrued  
And Dunbar field resound thy praises loud  
And Worcester's laureate wreath : yet much remains  
To conquer still ; Peace hath her victories  
No less renowned than War : new foes arise  
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains,  
Help us to save free conscience from the paw  
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw."*

But all this time Cromwell watched anxiously the course Parliament was taking. Instead of healing the sores caused by the war, it debated for months bills whose aims were simply the perpetuation of their own power. This was the reason why Cromwell turned out the Parliament (in a too violent manner one must admit) and not that he might become supreme head of the State with all political power vested in his hands. Although by this unprecedented act supreme power did fall to Cromwell, he did not retain that power. It was not until a Council of State had been formed and a Parliament called and dismissed that he assumed the title of Lord Protector of the British Commonwealth (Dec. 16, 1653).

The Protectorship of Oliver Cromwell was the greatest phase in his career. As a politician we recognise him as one active in voicing his countrymen's grievances ; as a soldier we hail him as one of the most accomplished in history ; and as a ruler we acknowledge him as one equal in ability to any monarch or statesman. During the five years of his rule, Oliver raised England from being the weakest power in Europe to the foremost nation in the world. That part of his home policy which he will always be honoured for, is his policy in matters of religion. Ever the earnest advocate of the rights of conscience,



he tolerated all sects, so long as they meddled not to disturb the State. Popery and prelacy he prescribed on grounds political rather than religious; to the adherents of both he showed private lenity. He desired and earnestly attempted to extend the rights of citizenship to the outcast and persecuted Jews.

Cromwell's foreign policy, however, brought him most renown. Under him the Commonwealth became the head and protectress of Protestant Europe. He made peace with Holland and tried to form a league of all the Protestant States. He protected the Waldenses of Piedmont against the persecutors, using the pen of Milton in his protest. The victories gained by his fleet under Blake brought him at once glory and treasure. He sedulously fostered British commerce and by the hand of Blake chastised the pirate States of Barbary.

Cromwell's boast that he would make the name of Englishmen as respected as that of Roman had been, was, so long as he ruled, fulfilled. His bitterest enemies could not deny the impression he made on the world, and the height to which he raised his country.

Just when the Government however, was striking root, and people of rank were beginning to ally themselves with it, disease and care, together with grief at the death of his favourite daughter, Elizabeth Claypole, cut short his life. Oliver Cromwell passed away quietly on the 3rd of September, 1659, the anniversary day of his great triumphs of Dunbar and Worcester.

Though Cromwell has passed away he is not forgotten. His work still lives. His principles of political and religious government are to a great extent the principles of political and religious government to-day. He is the connecting link between the old order of English society

and the new. He did away with arbitrary monarchy and religion based principally on dogma, and in their place gave us liberty of conscience and a monarchy whose position is to serve the State or go.



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